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Town of Rehoboth

**NPDES PII SMALL MS4 GENERAL PERMIT ANNUAL REPORT
MARCH '03-MARCH '04**

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Self-Assessment:

The Town of Rehoboth encountered major set backs in much of its operational structure during 2004; and because of this, the Conservation Department and Planning Department were greatly detrimented. In particular, the Town's Planner / Conservation Agent resigned and sought employment in the private sector leaving Rehoboth without a Conservation Agent and Planner for the remaining last 4 months of '04.

During this time, manning the day to day operations became arduous, and maintaining oversight over the Wetlands Protection Act and our local planning ordinances without a Conservation Agent nor Planner occupied much of the remaining limited resources that the Town could muster. This situation pushed our volunteer Boards/Commissions to the brink. Accordingly, the implementation of Rehoboth's Stormwater Phase II plan was segregated among those remaining employees and volunteers instead of a unified and cohesive effort of one person: the Conservation Agent.

Despite this, much of the first year's scheduled initiatives were in spirit, if not in fact, implemented awaiting the hiring of a new Conservation Agent. This effort was spearheaded by the Executive Secretary in an attempt to maintain the course of actions set forth in the plan and also in an attempt to closely keep the plan on schedule.

A new Conservation Agent was hired in winter months of '03/ '04 and the torch was handed off to her in anticipation that the Stormwater Plan could be caught up to schedule. The Town anticipated a smooth transition; however, instead of accepting the responsibilities of the Town's Stormwater Plan, the new Conservation Agent refused to undertake these responsibilities and the Executive Secretary was again left to implement the Plan. In part because of this, and other factors, less than a year after being appointed, the Board of Selectmen on October 18th, 2004 unanimously voted to NOT renew the Conservation Agent's contract and release her from service to the Town. Once again, the Town was without a single individual charged with overseeing and implementing the Stormwater Plan; however, the Executive Secretary again attempted to keep the Plan on schedule, to the best of his ability.

Compounding this, the unfortunate situation, the Town suffered a second set back during the Conservation Agent/ Town Planner hiring process. In January of '05, the Town reduced the applicants to one satisfactory candidate. However, the Selectmen and the individual never reached an agreed-to contract and once again, Rehoboth has had to re-post the positions. And, just as before, the volunteer Boards and Commissions have been left to fill the gap left void by the absence of the Agent/Planner. Therefore, given the fact that the previous Conservation Agent refused to undertake the Stormwater responsibilities, which greatly contributed to her contract not being renewed: the Town has had no single individual to oversee the Stormwater plan since August of 2003.

Despite these setbacks, Rehoboth is confident that the hiring of a new Conservation Agent will aid in our Plan's oversight and we will be more capable to implement all of its objectives moving forward.

As a self evaluation of the Town's initial year, the Town gives itself a C- as a grade. Much of our initiatives listed in our Stormwater Phase II plan were in spirit, if not in fact, implemented. However, the lack of a cohesive and unified effort hampered our ability to oversee the plan, as evidenced by the tardiness of this report.

The 6 Criteria:

- A) Public Education
- B) Public Participation
- C) Illicit Discharge Detection and Abatement
- D) Construction Site Run-Off
- E) Post Construction Run-Off
- F) Pollution Prevention

Per The Town's Plan, the following criteria and goals were set forth, presented and accepted: The Town's goals, as set forth in its plan are in ***bold italics 10 point font***. The accompanying text following said goals is this year's measured result and any subsequent revisions are in red text.

Year One:

Public Education and Participation:

Original Goal as specified in the Town's Stormwater Plan:

In year one of the program, the Town intends to set the groundwork for a system of stormwater management that includes a hands-on approach. The first course of business will be to establish a committee comprised of local residents: the "Stormwater Phase II Implementation Committee." Through the ongoing participation and/or duties of this committee, the year one "public education" and "public participation" elements will be satisfied.

It is anticipated that this committee shall be comprised of 3-5 resident-members who will be appointed by, and report to, the Board of Selectmen. Their first charge shall be to develop, in year one, the groundwork for public education outreach programs such as: 1) articles written in the local news magazine, "The Rehoboth Reporter" (which is delivered to 100% of the households in Rehoboth and Seekonk, on a monthly bases) 2) to issue news releases in local papers and 3) to develop a cable access press release to run on the local cable television scroll.

Result:

The Board of Selectmen has established a Stormwater Implementation Committee, which to date, has no members on said Committee. Despite numerous recruitment attempts, a sufficient pool of qualified volunteers has yet to be garnered. Even in light of this obstacle, the education elements of this goal have been satisfactorily carried-out through the efforts of the Selectmen's Office.

Articles in the local monthly news magazine, "The Rehoboth Reporter", have in fact been published. The cable access scroll has run a press release as well as various cable Stormwater informational programming.

Thus, in this one area, the goal has been actually exceeded, as the public information portion has been a great success despite the lack of public participation.

Public Education Original Goal Plan Continued:

These public outreach initiatives will explain to the citizenry of Rehoboth, and all others within the circulation of said news agencies, the necessity to monitor and regulate stormwater and to further illuminate the need to protect our natural resources, especially our wetlands and groundwater.

Revised Plan:

We have learned that the Town has put too much emphasis on the reliance of volunteers and a shift in ideology to a paid employee is being examined heavily. The Conservation Commission has informed the Selectmen and the Finance Committee that within the next 2-5 years, the Conservation Agent's job must change from a 20 hour position to a 40 hour per week position. This shift in ideology is in part due to the lessons learned from the lack of public participation through volunteers.

Whether or not the Agent's hours are increased, the new Agent will be directed to establish and oversee an outreach program, including in-the-field workshops and walkthroughs. Because of this, as the Stormwater Plan continues through years two and three, and the duties increase, the Conservation Commission has argued that the need for a full-time Conservation Agent will be supported. This debate will ultimately be determined subsequently and the Town's Stormwater Plan will more than likely have to be amended to coincide accordingly.

Public Education Original Goal Plan Continued:

Another charge of the Stormwater Phase II Implementation Committee, in year one of the plan, shall be to develop the groundwork for a permanent, paid, Town-employee who shall be charged with monitoring and implementing all aspects of the plan on an ongoing and continuing basis. Working with the Personnel Board and the Finance Committee, the Implementation Committee shall hold scheduled and announced open meetings with the public to develop the position.

Revised Plan:

As mentioned supra, we have learned that the Town has put too much emphasis on the reliance of volunteers and a shift in ideology to a paid employee earlier than first anticipated is being examined. Furthermore, the initial belief that the Conservation Agent could incorporate the added duties of Stormwater without any additional hours is being reexamined, as well. Also, as previously mentioned, the Conservation Commission is heavily supporting an increase in hours and the restructuring of duties for their Agent. This is due, in great part, they argue, to the necessity to implement and oversee Rehoboth's Stormwater Plan.

Public Education Original Goal Plan Continued:

When the "Storm Water Illicit Discharge Officer, "S.W.I.D. Officer" is hired in year 3 of the plan, he/she will be charged with all of the authority to monitor and implement the By-laws which will govern the stormwater plan. In year one of the plan, the Implementation Committee shall coordinate with the Conservation Commission, Highway Department, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to develop goals, objectives, duties, and responsibilities of the S.W.I.D. Officer.

Result:

The heart of this portion of the Plan is not slated until the 3rd year; however, the Town is reconsidering not only the timeframe of having an individual appointed to oversee the By-laws but also the need to classify a separate individual with these duties.

Revised Plan:

The Town still intends on maintaining the spirit of this goal in its initial form; however, as mentioned supra, the Conservation Committee's initiative to increase and modify the hours and duties of their Agent may negate the necessity of a separate and distinct job classification. Nonetheless, if there is to be a separate SWID Officer, as submitted in the Town's original Plan, appointing a SWID Officer by the third year of the Plan may not be an achievable goal, due in great part to the Town's delay in achieving much of the groundwork leading up to this appointment. Despite the delay, the Town intends to fully conform with this initiative's spirit, either through a separate and distinct classification or by increasing the Agent's hours.

Public Education Original Goal Plan Continued:

Once the position is developed, a public education initiative shall be designed and implemented in an attempt to garner public support for the position anticipating the need for a favorable vote at Town Meeting. This

these Stormwater illicit discharge and abatement BMPs. In fact, many Stormwater BMPs are already being enforced through the planning ordinances, such as the need for run-off abatement practices such as hay-bails.

Revised Plan:

The Town has full intention to continue with this goal; however, the lack of a Conservation Agent and/or a sustainable volunteer committee has placed this goal behind schedule. Despite the tardiness of reaching this goal in the desired timeframe, the Town fully intends to pursue it to its fruition in as timely a manner as is possible given the lack of a Conservation Agent.

Illicit Discharge Original Goal Plan Continued:

The purpose of the Warrant Articles will be to officially create the position of the S.W.I.D. Officer and also to adopt By-law(s), which regulate stormwater. Guidelines and procedures will be outlined in the By-law(s) along with potential administrative and monetary relief for noncompliance.

Revised Plan:

Because this portion of the Plan is actually more suited for future years, there is no ascertainable goal met at this time. By-laws and the development of the SWID Officer is mainly a function of future years of the plan, despite its inclusion in the early stages of the Plan's outline. Nonetheless, the Town is reevaluating this goal in as much as the development of a separate and distinct SWID Officer, as mentioned supra.

The Implementation Committee shall have all discussions in scheduled open meetings accepting public input and adopting changes in the S.W.I.D. Officer's duties, responsibilities, and pay as time progresses until the final job description is accepted by the Personnel Board, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and eventually by Town Meeting vote. Furthermore, there shall be numerous open meetings and/or public hearings, to discuss the By-Law wording, including the penalties for noncompliance. It will be the responsibility of the Stormwater Implementation Committee to draft the framework of said By-Law(s).

Result:

The Above directive was not met. The lack of a sustainable Implementation Committee, resulted in their being no public hearings scheduled nor held. However, the Conservation Committee Chairman, in open meetings with the Finance Committee, has broached the subject that in increase in duties and a lack of volunteerism is cause for a reevaluation of the Agent's duties and job description. Therefore, the above goal was not met in its original form; however, the spirit of the goal is being debated publicly and the goals of this initiative are a hot topic of public debate.